



# **SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES' ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE**

Presented by Bishop Geoff Davies  
2009 SAB Environmentalist of the Year  
For mobilizing the Faith Communities to care  
for the Environment



**SAFCEI**

**was  
launched  
in  
July 2005  
by  
Nobel Peace  
Laureate,  
Wagari  
Maathai,**





# SAFCEI

## **MISSION**

**We are an institute of people of many faiths, united in our diversity through our common commitment to earthkeeping.**

## **AIM**

**Our aim is to support the faith communities in fulfilling their environmental & socio-economic responsibility.**



# The Earth Charter

## The principle core values:

- I Respect and care for the community of life**
- II Ecological integrity**
- III Social and economic justice**
- IV Democracy, non-violence and peace**

It is essential that principles form the basis of our decision making.

Climate Change is a moral issue

# SAFCEI RESOURCES

Produced in partnership with Indalo Yethu



**Waste is our responsibility**

**Live simply that others may simply live**

Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute

SAFCEI  
Tel: 021 701 8145  
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P O Box 106, Kalk Bay, 7990  
Fax: 086 696 9666  
secretary@safcei.org.za

**Climate change affects us all**

**Live your faith. Change your lifestyle**

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Indalo Yethu  
SOUTH AFRICA'S ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGN

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**Biodiversity is life in all its fullness**

**Respect and care for it**

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**Water source of all life**

**value it!**

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# All Faiths call for Justice and Equity

- Traditionally in Africa, Ubuntu calls for sharing and respect for people and sacred places
- “Islam teaches that there is a fundamental link and interdependency between all natural elements, therefore if man abuses or exhausts one element, the natural world as a whole will suffer direct consequences”. (MJC)

For Jews and Christians our sacred texts start with the words:

***“In the beginning, God...***

***In the beginning God created...***

***In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”*** (Genesis 1:1)

# We are told to care for and look after God's creation

- In being given “rule over” (Genesis 1:28) we were to protect and care for creation for God, not exploit it. We have abused this, just as apartheid abused “rule”
- In Genesis 2:15 we were told to “till and keep” the Garden
- We are also told we can't worship God and money (Matthew 6:24) and that we should seek God's Kingdom and his righteousness, and all else will be ours as well.

# Justice and Equity are fundamental to the Old Testament

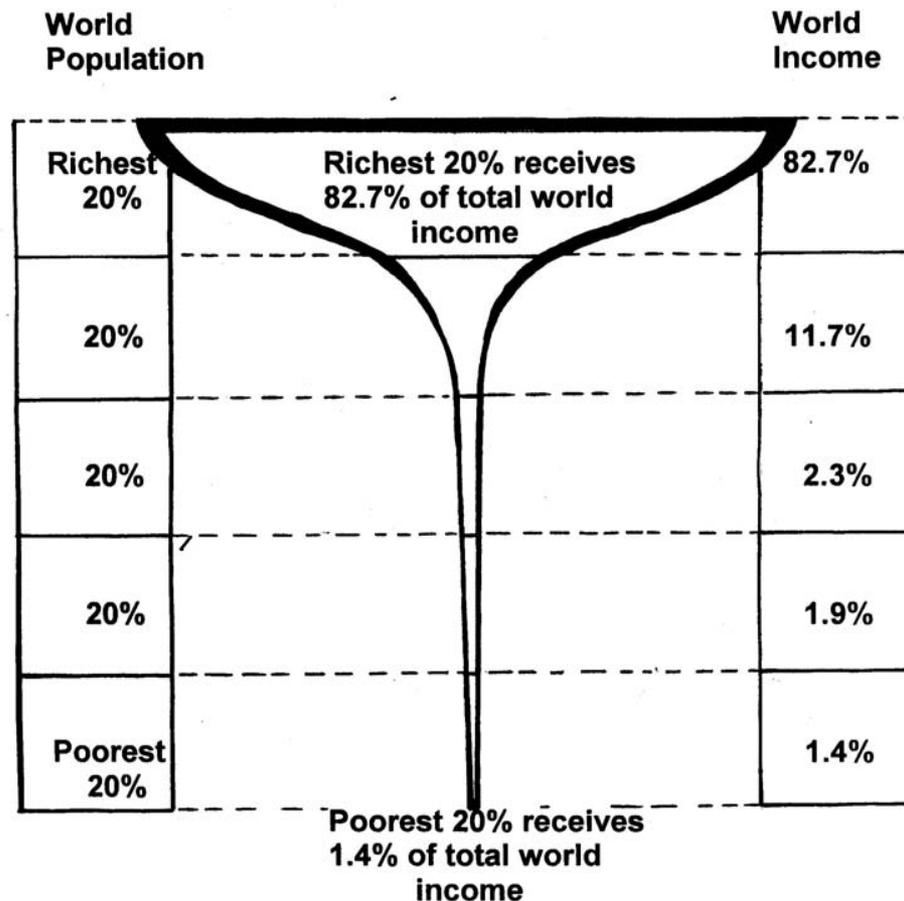
- When God fed the Israelites in the desert with manna from Heaven, each person had as much as was needed.
- The Old Testament Prophets constantly called for justice to flow down like a stream
- But if ever there was a time of inequity and worshipping money, it is now – here in SA and around the world
- We are literally killing the world in pursuit of money.

# Economic Justice

- Richest 10% owns 85% of global assets
- Poorest 50% of the world's population now receives 1% of total world income

## Global Distribution of Income

UNDP 1992



# We know SA now has the highest Gini coefficient in the world

- Conflict is the result of inequity and injustice
- We know in SA that we had to overcome the injustices of apartheid if we wanted peace
- We now have global apartheid.  
We have to establish justice globally if we want peace in the world
- There are enough resources if we share

# Climate injustice is now the greatest threat

- Why? Because of this wonderful source of energy – oil and coal. Burning fossil fuel releases millions of years old CO<sub>2</sub>
- It is poisoning our world
- But we can still promote Development. We just have to use renewable energy and we have some of the best RE resources in the world. The sun gives us 6,000 times more energy than we need – just tap it

Another source of energy is our greatest resource – our people power

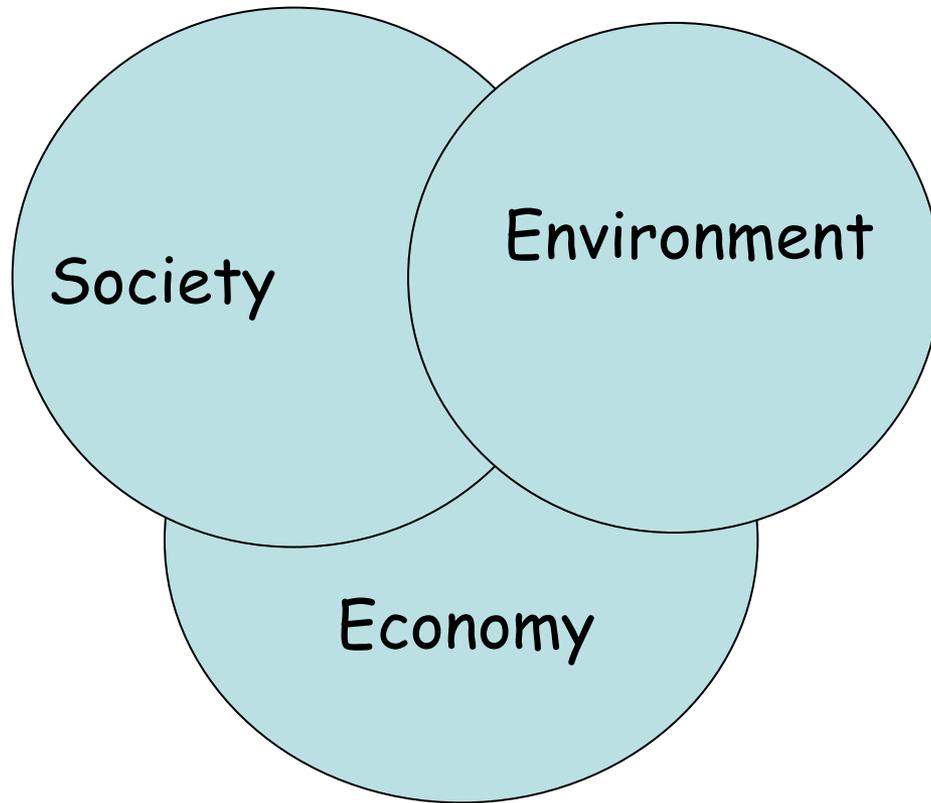
- Unemployment one of our greatest social problems.
- Instead of following the USA route of high capital, high tech high energy, go the African way of our own capital, with appropriate skills, employing our people, not relying on energy intensive machines.

# What does that mean?

- Thabo's car wash!
- Organic farming.
- We have reached peak oil. We in Africa can provide food for the world, not dependent on fossil fuel for fertilizer and combine harvesters like the USA

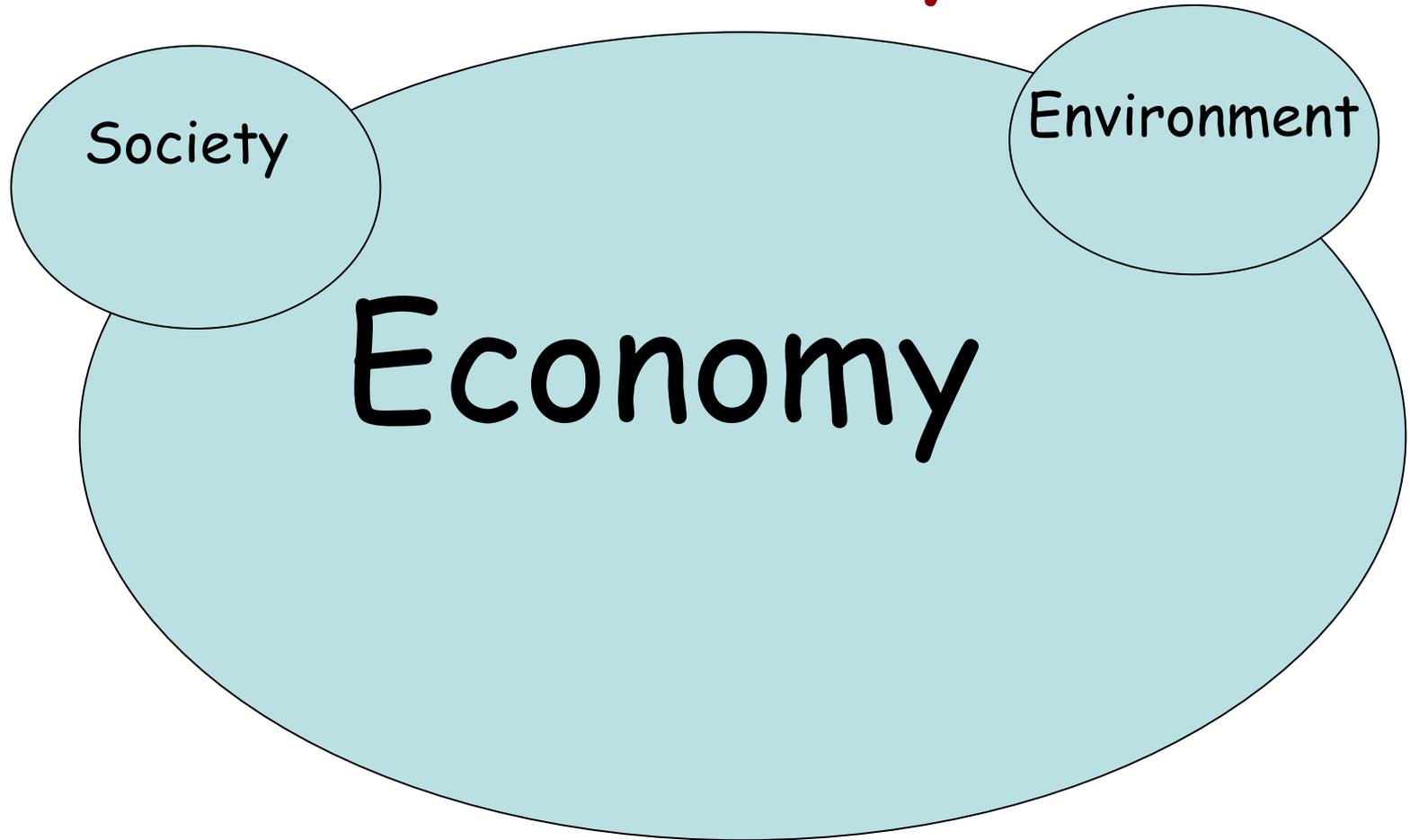
# We know we and the UN follow 'Sustainable Development'

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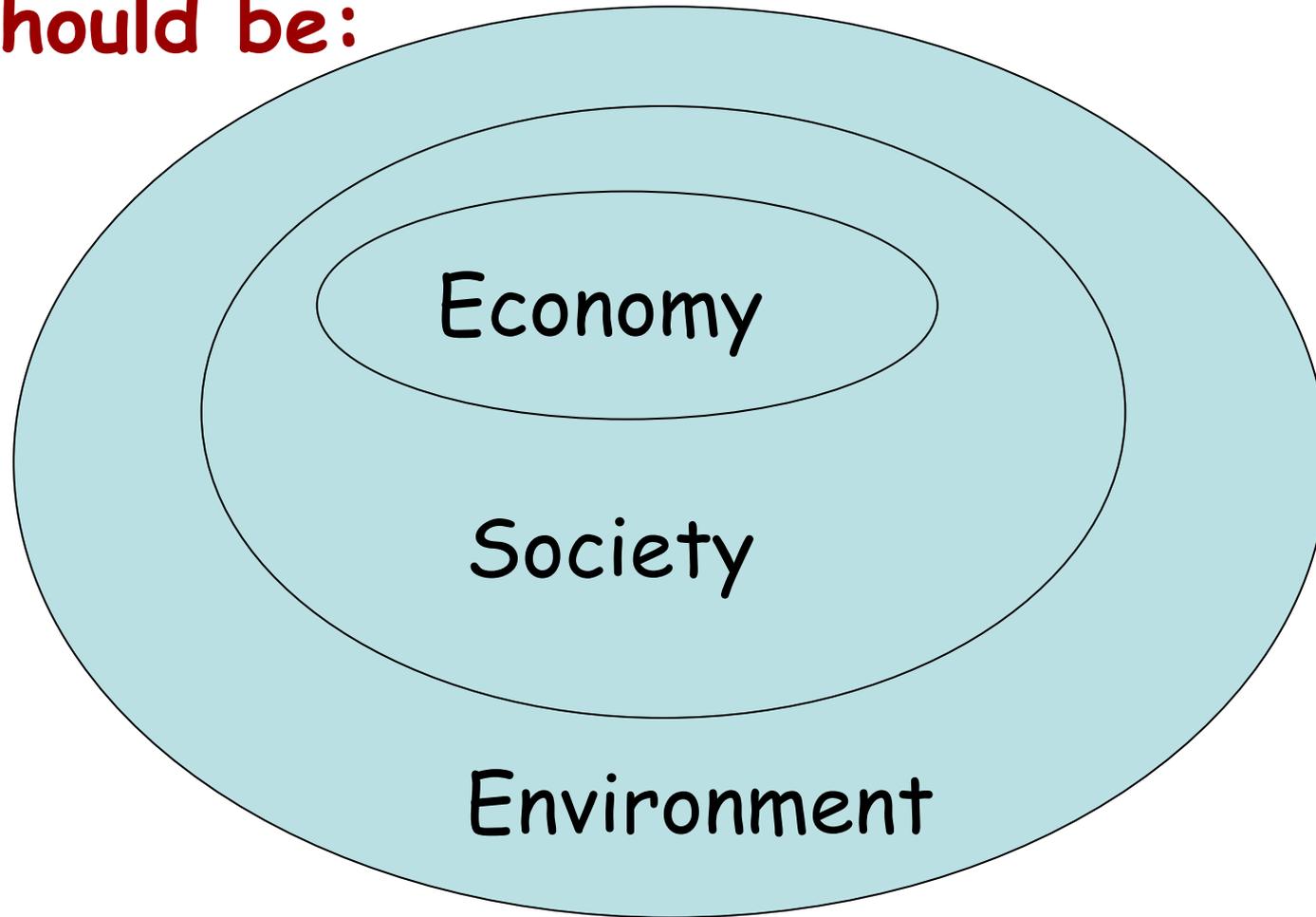
# Sustainable Development

'The reality'



# How sustainable development

should be:



# Environment and Development

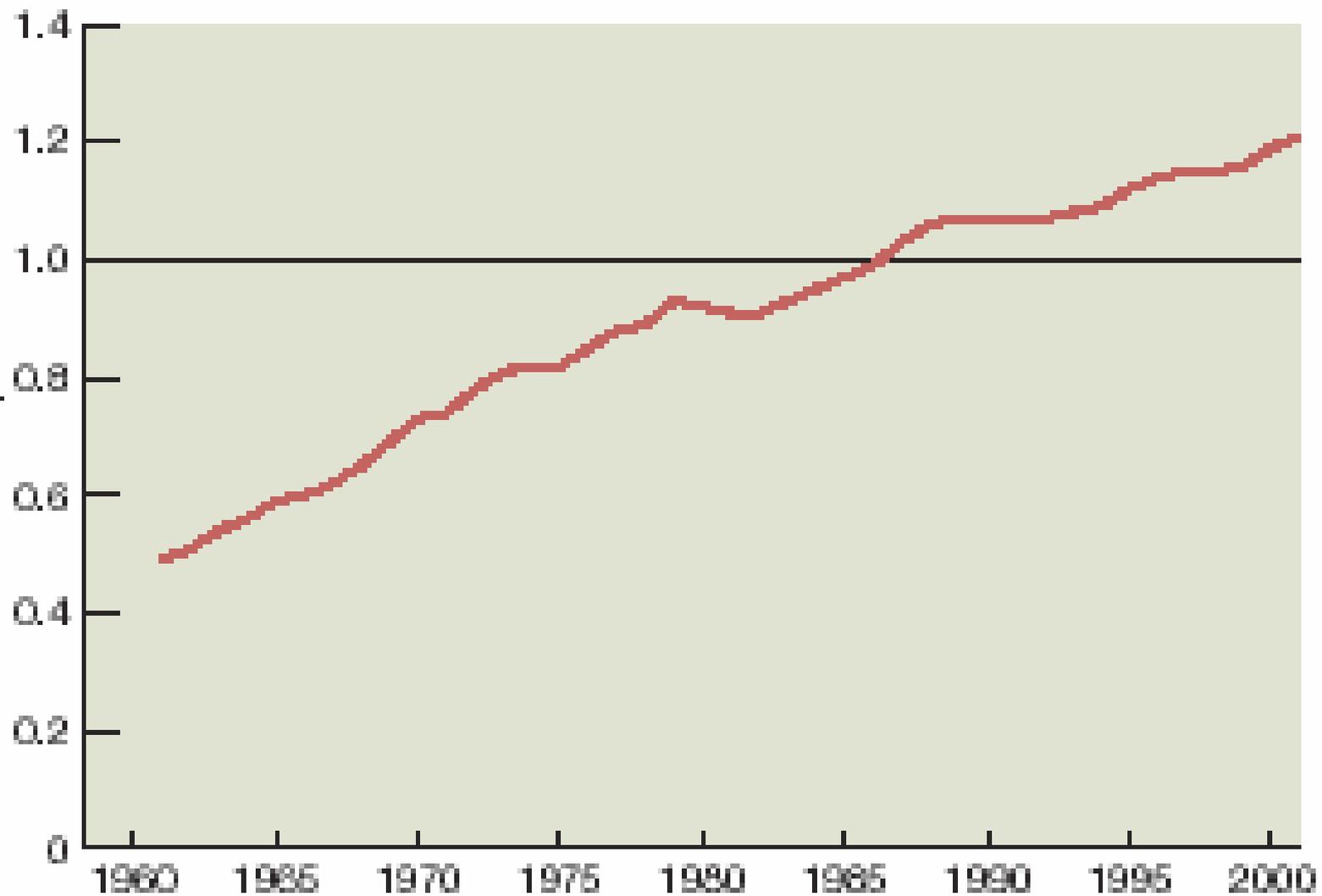
- Many people don't understand why the environment is important - not realizing the environment is all that is around us.
- In South Africa there is an urgent need for development, poverty eradication and job creation – this will not be possible if we don't take care of our environment.



# We cannot survive without the natural environment

- We must work for development, but it must be with the natural environment.
- At present we are killing our life support systems of water, clean air and soil – 65% of natural resources are degraded or destroyed, including forest & fish stocks
- We are bringing about the future disadvantaged

**Fig. 2: HUMANITY'S ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT, 1961-2001**



Nobel Peace Laureate,  
Prof Wangari Maathai  
states:

*Unless we have democracy  
and human rights,  
with care and equitable access  
to natural resources,  
we won't have peace*

# A Sustainable Future?

A sustainable future is possible only if we establish

**ECO-JUSTICE**

**\*Economic**

**\*Ecological**



# Economic Justice

Don't waste resources on so-called "Defence". Security comes through establishing true justice.

***Zechariah 7:9-11;***

***Psalm 33:16***

Even half the US Defence Budget would solve the world's problems of poverty and environmental degradation.



# Ecological Justice

Treat the natural environment with respect & justice:  
That means living in harmony with God's creation -  
not pillaging and poisoning it.



# The most serious threat is **CLIMATE CHANGE**

This is changing ecosystems,  
impacting on all aspects of life including:

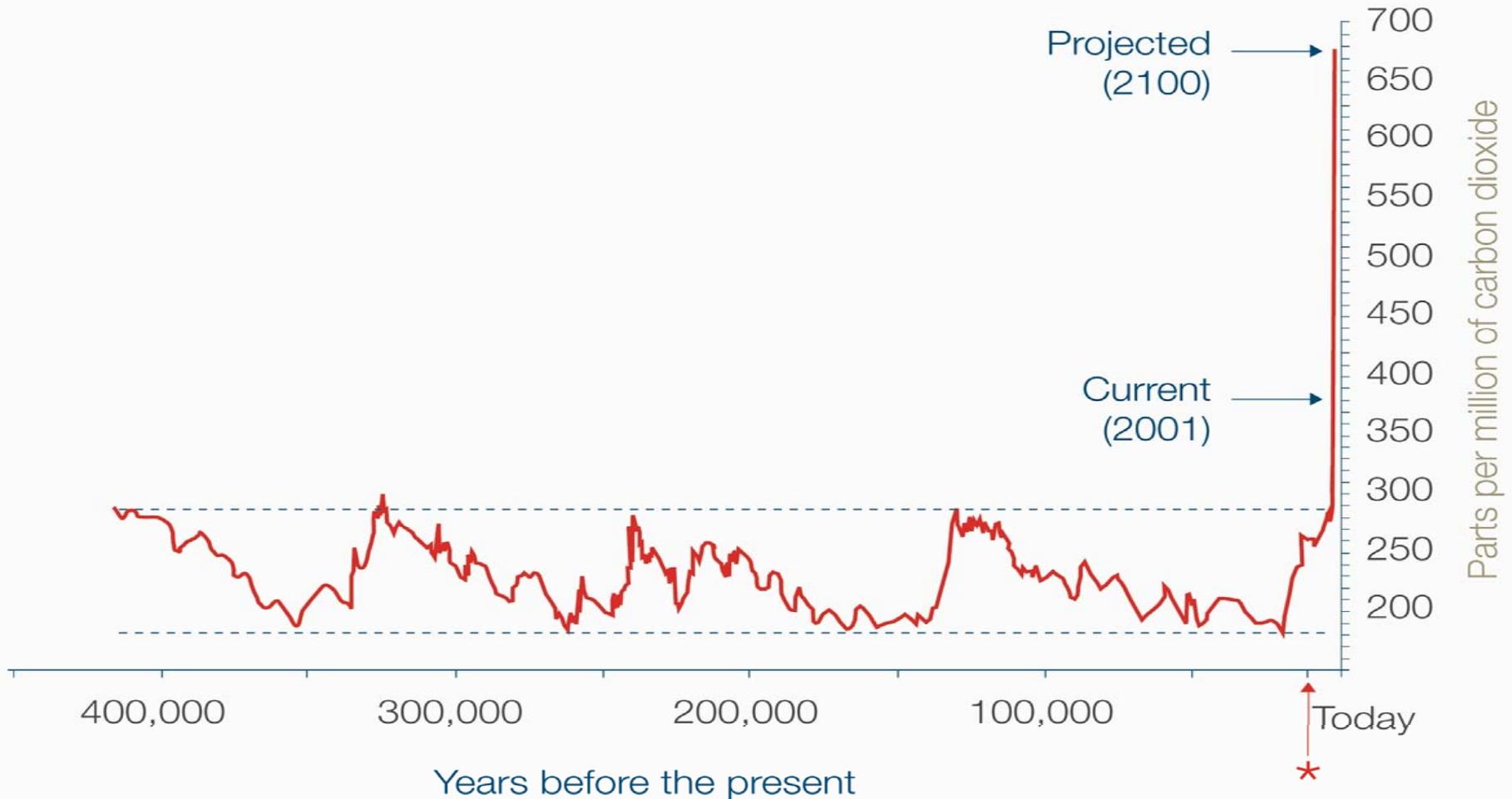
- natural resources: e.g. water, fish, forests....
- agriculture,
- health
- human wellbeing.

We dare not allow the  
temperature of the  
globe to continue to  
rise.



# Carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere are at a higher level than for 400,000 years

Source: Co-operative Research Centre for Greenhouse Accounting, 2001



\*Note: Civilisation began 7,000-10,000 years ago

# Our competitive advantage

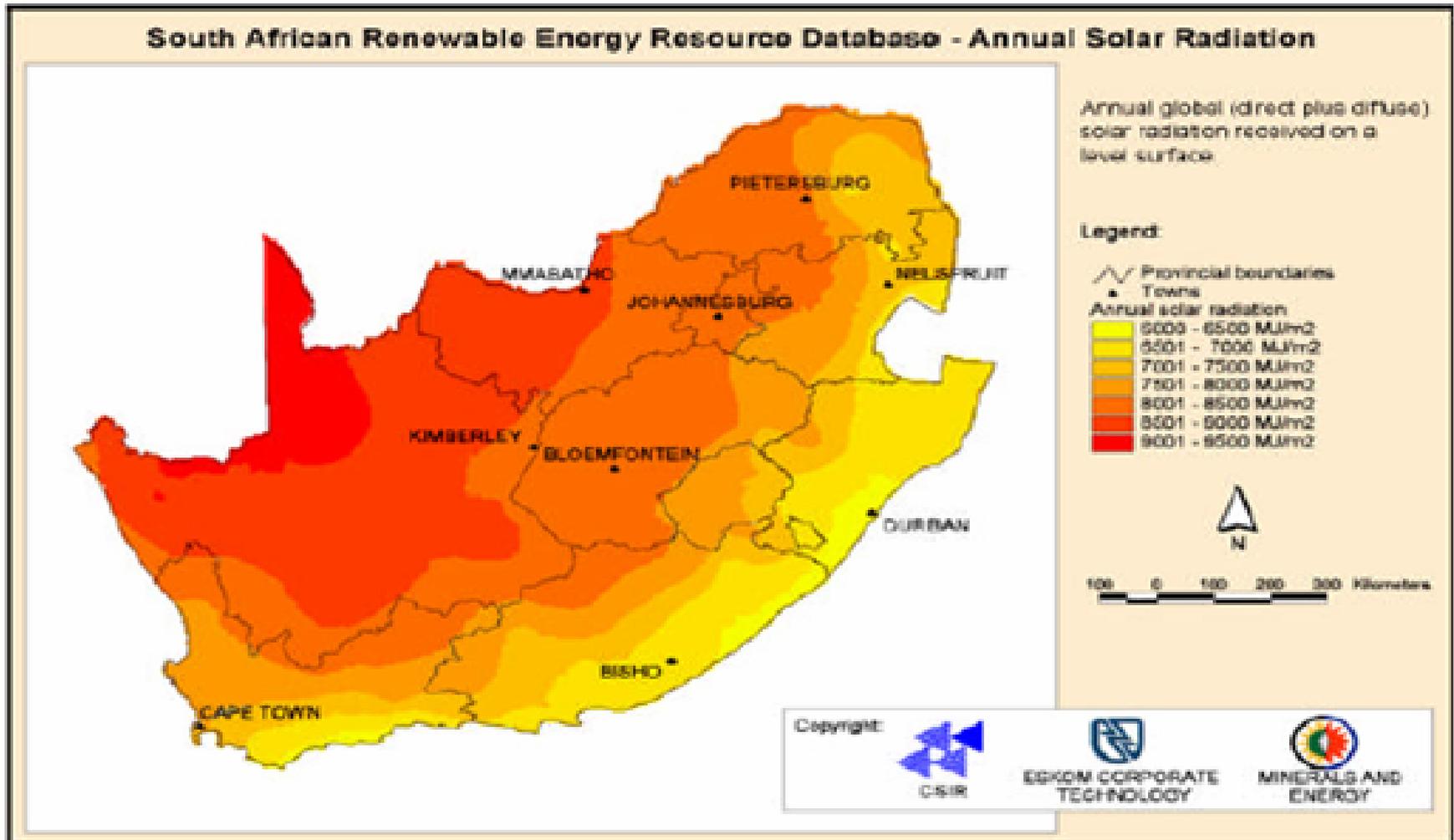


Figure 4.6: Annual solar radiation for South Africa

# **SAFCEI Climate Change RESOLUTION:**

- ***As people of faith, we believe we have a responsibility to God and future generations to care for this planet – our home.  
We therefore call on the governments of the world when they meet at the UNFCCC at Copenhagen in December this year to take urgent and meaningful action to stem climate change.***
- ***Following the latest scientific evidence we believe we cannot allow temperatures to rise by 2 degrees. We therefore call for a reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to a target of 350 ppm, ensuring that emissions will have peaked by 2015 in all countries, to then decline to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.***

# Ecological Debt

- We do need payment of ecological debt to enable Africa to develop clean, renewable energy, from sun, wind and hydro.
- Through this clean energy, we can power electric vehicles and provide electricity for domestic use and towns
- Wind and solar generation can be developed within two years – through IPPs

- We don't need new coal fired power stations which take 8 or 10 years to build, at great cost! With a mix our present power stations can provide for mining and heavy industry
- Nuclear is becoming prohibitively expensive.
- We, citizens, should have a say in how we invest for the future
- God has provided all the energy we need from renewable sources
- Africa has abundant sun, wind and hydro resources.

# A new, clean, solar era is possible

- We don't want to be held hostage to nuclear and coal
- Let us cooperate globally for our children's future
- We should all, of whatever Faith or nation, unite to ensure we leave a habitable planet for our children

# The End

- Or is it the start of a new era of living in harmony with God, with one another and with God's creation?
- Blessings on your hearings as you consider these challenges.

Let us get going NOW!

An idea that is developed and put into action is more important than an idea that exists only as an idea. [Buddha](#)

